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Third report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 1936 (2010)

I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 6 of its resolution 1936 (2010), the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to report to the Council every four months on the progress made towards the fulfilment of the responsibilities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). The present report is the third submitted pursuant to that resolution.

2. The report provides an update on the activities of the United Nations in Iraq since my last report (S/2011/213) of 31 March 2011. It covers key political developments, and regional and international events concerning Iraq.

II. Summary of key political developments pertaining to Iraq

A. Political developments

3. On 12 May 2011, the Council of Representatives approved the nomination of three Vice-Presidents, namely Adel Abdel Mahdi, Tariq al-Hashimi and Khudayr al-Khuzai. On 27 May, however, Vice-President Abdel Mahdi, a leading figure in the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq and a key component of the National Alliance, announced his resignation, which was accepted on 11 July by the President, Jalal Talabani, citing the need to reduce the size of the Government.

4. During the reporting period, demonstrations continued in Iraq, protestors calling primarily for job creation, an improvement in the delivery of essential services and an end to corruption. On 8 April and 25 May, the Sadrists organized a large demonstration in Baghdad and demanded that United States military forces leave Iraq by the end of 2011. On 9 April, the eighth anniversary of the fall of the former regime, there were similar demonstrations in other parts of the country.

5. Since February 2011, in response to public protests, the Government of Iraq has been working to fulfil its pledge to improve the socio-economic situation while also implementing the new government programme. The Government set a 100-day deadline to evaluate ministerial programmes and determine a way to better respond to the needs of the people of Iraq. At the end of this period, from 7 to 12 June, a number of ministers briefed the Council of Ministers on the achievements of their

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respective ministries. Their presentations were broadcast live on television. On 14 June, the Prime Minister addressed the nation on the progress made by his Government. A further effort to accelerate policy decisions and implementation over the next three months has been agreed upon.

6. There are continuing disagreements among the main political blocs regarding who should head the country's top three security ministries — namely the Ministries of Defence, the Interior and National Security. Consensus still has not been reached regarding the establishment of a National Council for Strategic Policies, which was agreed upon as part of the Erbil agreement negotiated in November 2010 to facilitate the government formation process. Political blocs differ over the required legislation, composition and mandate.

7. In the Kurdistan region, there were demonstrations in the city of Sulemaniyah and adjacent districts over perceived corruption, inadequate services and the lack of political reform in the region. In particular, opposition parties, namely, the Goran party, the Kurdistan Islamic Union and the Kurdistan Islamic Group have complained of the long-standing control of the Kurdistan Regional Government by the two main ruling parties, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). In response, President Massoud Barzani of the Kurdistan Regional Government put forward a plan for political reforms and a series of emergency debates on reforms were held in the Kurdistan Regional Parliament. On 4 and 8 June, the leaders of KDP and PUK met with the three opposition parties to discuss the political situation.

8. In Kirkuk, Kurdish parties holding the two most senior political posts, Governor and Chairman of the Provincial Council, agreed to give up the latter, as a gesture of goodwill in order to move the political process forward and to accommodate a long-standing demand by Turkmen and Arab components. Hassan Turan (Turkmen) was elected to the post of Chairman, Najmaldin O. Karim (Kurdish) was appointed as the new Governor and Rakan Sa'id al-Jubouri (Arab) remained Deputy Governor.

9. On 31 March, Kurdish Peshmerga troops that had been deployed around the city of Kirkuk since 25 February 2011 withdrew and returned to the Kurdistan region. The incident served as a reminder of the challenges that remain as the United States Forces in Iraq draw down and the combined security mechanism comes to an end. The combined security mechanism was established to encourage Iraqi security forces and Kurdish Peshmerga troops to coordinate their operations, set up joint patrols and checkpoints and exchange information under the auspices of the United States Forces. The Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government have yet to agree on the future of the combined security mechanism or any successor arrangements that could be put into place after the departure of the United States Forces.

10. The United States Forces in Iraq have continued their planned withdrawal from the country with the intention of completing their departure by 31 December 2011, as envisaged under the status-of-forces agreement signed between the Governments of Iraq and the United States of America. Discussions have been ongoing regarding the possibility of some United States forces remaining beyond 2011 to provide training and support. The Prime Minister has stated that the issue would be decided on a consensus basis through dialogue among the political blocs, as formal agreement would require approval by the Council of Representatives.

B. Regional developments pertaining to Iraq

11. Since the formation of the new Government, Iraq has taken steps to strengthen its cooperation with neighbouring countries. A joint ministerial committee consisting of senior officials from Iraq and Kuwait met on 28 and 29 March 2011 in Kuwait to discuss all outstanding issues, both Iraq's outstanding obligations to the Security Council and other issues of bilateral interest. The minutes of the meeting have yet to be agreed upon.

12. On 18 May in Baghdad, Iraq hosted a consultative meeting of the Tripartite Commission on Missing Persons led by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). On 22 and 23 May, my High-level Coordinator met with Iraqi officials in Baghdad to discuss the situation concerning missing Kuwaiti persons and third-country nationals, and Kuwaiti property, including archives. A subsequent meeting of the Technical Subcommittee of the Tripartite Commission was held in Kuwait on 8 June.

13. On 26 and 27 May, an Iraqi delegation, comprising officials from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Transport, visited Kuwait to ascertain facts relating to the planned construction of the Mubarak al-Kabeer Port on Bubiyan Island in Kuwait. The delegation was sent after several members of the Council of Representatives made statements claiming that the Kuwaiti port would affect the economic and navigational interests of Iraq. The report of the delegation has been presented to the Council of Ministers of Iraq. Iraq and Kuwait continue to clarify the matter bilaterally through diplomatic channels.

14. The long-standing issue of compensation for Iraqi citizens whose assets remained on Kuwaiti territory after the demarcation of the boundary between Iraq and Kuwait is still pending resolution. This matter was addressed in Security Council resolution 899 (1994), and in September 2009 the United Nations provided the Permanent Mission of Iraq with the proposals and documentation to address the issue.

15. On 28 and 29 March, the Prime Minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, accompanied by high-level government and business representatives, met with Prime Minister Al-Maliki in Baghdad and discussed ways to strengthen bilateral cooperation in the fields of economy, security and energy. Prime Minister Erdoğan also met with Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, and visited Erbil to meet with officials from the Kurdistan Regional Government, including President Massoud Barzani and Prime Minister Barham Saleh.

16. On 5 May, the League of Arab States announced the postponement of its summit, which was to be held in Baghdad in May 2011, until March 2012. The decision was reached after consultations among the States members, of the League, taking into account the current situation in several Arab countries.

17. Other high-level visits took place during the reporting period. On 11 May, the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ali Akbar Salehi, visited Baghdad to discuss bilateral matters and exchange views on regional issues. On 31 May, the Foreign Minister of the Syrian Arab Republic, Walid al-Muallem, visited Baghdad. During his visit, a memorandum of understanding was signed on energy cooperation between the two countries. On 31 May, the Prime Minister of Jordan, Marouf Bakhit, visited Iraq to meet Prime Minister Al-Maliki. The two Prime Ministers

co-chaired meetings of the sixth session of the Joint Jordanian-Iraqi Higher Committee. The two sides agreed to increase trade through the removal of obstacles hindering the flow of goods between the two countries.

C. International developments

18. On 22 June, the Security Council discussed my thirty-first report pursuant to paragraph 14 of resolution 1284 (1999) regarding the repatriation or return of all Kuwaiti and third-country nationals or their remains, and the return of all Kuwaiti property, including archives, seized by the Saddam regime.

19. The Government of Iraq has yet to confirm its readiness to continue the Iraq-Kuwait boundary maintenance project and contribute its share of the additional funding required to complete the project. I have yet to receive a response from the Government of Iraq to my note verbale dated 29 April 2011 requesting the Government's confirmation in this regard.

20. On 28 April, pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 1956 (2010), the Government of Iraq submitted a report (S/2011/290) to the Security Council confirming that it had completed the arrangements that will ensure the full and effective transition to a new mechanism to replace the Development Fund for Iraq. On 30 June 2011, in accordance with paragraph 1 of resolution 1956 (2010), the termination of arrangements for depositing proceeds from export sales of petroleum, petroleum products and natural gas into the Development Fund for Iraq came into effect, as well as the arrangements for monitoring of the Fund by the International Advisory and Monitoring Board. On 1 July 2011, oversight of the full proceeds from the Fund was transferred from the International Advisory and Monitoring Board to the Government of Iraq's Committee of Financial Experts, which will exercise authority in accordance with its terms of reference approved by the Council of Ministers.

III. Activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq

A. Political activities

21. The standing consultative mechanism met several times during the reporting period. This initiative, which was launched in March 2011 under the auspices of UNAMI, brings together representatives of key political blocs to discuss outstanding issues related to disputed internal territories, including Kirkuk. The participants include representatives of the three main political blocs: Deputy Prime Minister Rowsch Shaways (Kurdistan Alliance), Member of Parliament Hassan al-Sunaid (National Alliance) and Finance Minister Rafi al-Issawi (Iraqiya). The participants agreed to focus on the following issues: (a) Kirkuk, including power-sharing issues and conducting provincial council elections; (b) Ninewa, the current political stalemate, power-sharing and security issues; (c) the future of the combined security mechanism; and (d) the census. On 25 April, participants agreed that subsequent meetings would be expanded to include local stakeholders from the Kirkuk and Ninewa governorates. On 16 June, a meeting was held that brought together for the first time all members of the Council of Representatives from

Kirkuk in order to discuss issues related to power-sharing and the prospects of holding provincial council elections in Kirkuk.

22. In an effort to advance the dialogue mechanism, my Special Representative travelled to Erbil on 18 May, where he met with officials from the Kurdistan Regional Government, including President Massoud Barzani and Prime Minister Barham Saleh. On 26 May, the standing consultative mechanism reconvened and focused on the future of the combined security mechanism, including a possible liaison role for UNAMI under its mandate. The participants also discussed ways to resolve the political stalemate in Ninewa arising from the Kurdish boycott of the Ninewa Provincial Council after the Hadba List won control following the 2009 governorate elections. My Special Representative held a series of follow-up meetings with key national and local interlocutors, including provincial leaders in Ninewa, to promote consensus.

23. On 28 and 29 May, my Special Representative visited Diyala, Kirkuk and Ninewa to observe the existing security mechanism in each of the governorates under the combined security mechanism. He met with local commanders from the Iraqi army and police, as well as from the Kurdish Peshmerga. He also received briefings from the local commanders of the United States Forces in Iraq.

24. My Special Representative continued to encourage progress on the obligations of Iraq to the Security Council pertaining to Kuwait. On 6 June, he visited Kuwait to discuss the outcome of the Joint Ministerial Committee meeting and the further steps needed to address outstanding Chapter VII issues. While in Kuwait, he met with Prime Minister Sheikh Naser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, and the Foreign Policy Adviser to the Emir, Mohammad Abulhassan.

25. In accordance with the UNAMI mandate to promote regional dialogue, and in consultation with key United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, the UNAMI liaison office in Tehran explored ways to support bilateral cooperation between Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran in the fields of environmental protection, transboundary water resource management, cooperation on drug control and border demining. Cooperation on environmental protection envisages combating and mitigating the effects of dust storms and improving the management of marshlands. UNAMI also noted the interest of both countries in enhancing their cooperation on demining along the border, under the auspices of the relevant United Nations agencies, in particular the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

26. From 10 to 14 June, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, B. Lynn Pascoe, visited Iraq where he met with Prime Minister Al-Maliki, the Speaker of the Council of Representatives and the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government, as well as a number of other senior Iraqi officials. During the meetings, he reiterated the commitment of the United Nations to continue assisting Iraq and discussed ways the United Nations could focus its efforts to best respond to the needs of the Iraqi people. He emphasized the readiness of UNAMI to provide further assistance in identifying mutually agreeable solutions to pending issues related to the disputed internal territories. He also stressed the commitment of the United Nations country team to assist Iraq by providing technical advice and expertise in addressing development, human rights and humanitarian challenges.

During the visit, Prime Minister Al-Maliki confirmed the decision of the Government of Iraq to allocate an extended compound in Baghdad to UNAMI.

B. Electoral assistance activities

27. During the reporting period, UNAMI continued to support the Independent High Electoral Commission in its review of technical preparations for forthcoming electoral events, including governorate council elections in the Kurdistan region announced for 10 September 2011. The Commission has expressed concern that recent delays in passage of relevant electoral laws and the release of funding could compromise the planned timeline.

28. In April 2011, the Board of Commissioners of the Independent High Electoral Commission received from the Council of Representatives a list of 32 questions on alleged financial and administrative irregularities in the Commission. In the days preceding the questioning, one Commissioner resigned. On 12 May, the Council of Representatives voted to withdraw its confidence from another Commissioner, who has since challenged his removal before the Federal Supreme Court. The term of the current Board of Commissioners expires in May 2012. The status of Commission staff and their security of tenure will be important for the credibility of upcoming elections. In May 2011, the Office of the Prime Minister commissioned the establishment of a committee to determine those employees entitled to civil servant status within the Commission, which ideally will resolve a long-standing issue and provide permanence for professional Commission staff.

29. A United Nations integrated electoral team from UNAMI, UNDP and the United Nations Office for Project Services continued to provide capacity-building assistance. Several key activities have been implemented, including the training of Commission staff on software development, graphic design for ballots and other printed polling materials and electoral procurement, as well as on the development of content and multimedia tools for public-outreach activities. An assessment of the information technology and communications infrastructure of the Commission is also ongoing.

C. Technical preparations for the census

30. The United Nations Population Fund continued its capacity-building efforts to prepare the country for a nationwide census, if and when a decision to conduct such a census is made. Some preparatory census-taking stages were completed, including fieldwork numbering and the listing of buildings, dwellings and households in many parts of the country. On 10 July, the Government of Iraq released the findings of the listing and numbering of households, held as the first stage in the census-taking process. The release showed that 31.6 million people in Iraq lived in 4.8 million dwellings, and were contained in 4.7 million households with an average of 6.7 persons per household, of which 7.7 per cent are headed by women.

D. Development and humanitarian assistance

31. During the reporting period, the Government of Iraq expressed its commitment to improving the daily lives of the Iraqi people. Key economic and social indicators highlight the many challenges that lie ahead. The country's poverty index remains high, at 22.9 per cent, with a poverty gap of 4.5 per cent. Poverty levels vary considerably by governorate. Approximately 1.75 million Iraqis are estimated to be either internally displaced or refugees in neighbouring countries, constituting one of the largest displaced populations in the world. School enrolment rates have decreased at primary and secondary levels and include substantial regional and gender disparities. Illiteracy rates among the poor reached 29 per cent for those aged 10 and above (24 per cent urban and 33 per cent rural). In the health system, infant mortality decreased to 35 per 1,000 live births, and under-5 mortality to 41 per 1,000. The national average indicator for global acute malnutrition is 4.7 per cent among children under 5.

32. Further steps also need to be taken to improve the delivery of essential services. Shortages of water and sanitation services are acutely felt in urban centres where the majority of Iraqis now live. Outside Baghdad, potable water service coverage averages below 70 per cent (48 per cent in rural areas). An estimated 25 per cent of Baghdad residents remain disconnected from the water supply network. Approximately 50 per cent of wastewater collected is discharged into rivers without any treatment. Electricity demand has increased yearly by approximately 6 per cent since 2007. On 17 June 2011, a spokesperson for the Ministry of Electricity stated that power generated by the country's national grid will meet less than half of summer peak demand, some 15,000 megawatts. The spokesman said Government ministers had recently decided to allocate a further $927 million to increase the country's electricity-generating capacity.

33. In this context, the United Nations country team regularly contributed to weekly meetings of the Prime Minister's Monitoring Committee, which is responsible for coordinating the effort by the Government to respond to public demands calling for jobs, better services and an end to corruption. To date, the Committee has reviewed priority areas such as youth and employment, electricity, social dialogue, health, education, water and sanitation, and issues concerning internally displaced persons. It has been agreed that the Committee will continue its work during the coming months with the support of the United Nations.

34. On 14 May, Prime Minister Al-Maliki convened a conference to discuss the main issues and challenges highlighted in the "Iraq Briefing Book", a report jointly prepared by the Iraq Partners' Forum, which includes the United Nations, the World Bank and bilateral donors, and presented to the Government of Iraq earlier in 2011. The conference focused on the country's economic transition, the role of the private sector, public sector reform, State-owned enterprise reform and public financial management. Subsequent to the conference, a number of meetings were held with line ministries as well as the Office of the Prime Minister to support the implementation of the recommendations in the Briefing Book. The Government of Iraq has also announced the formation of the Partnership Committee. It will be a high-level inter-ministerial committee chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Issues that will work with the United Nations and the international community to address the policy and planning recommendations put forward in the Briefing Book as well as overall coordination issues.

35. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) has received funding equivalent to $538 million, which is nearly 30 per cent of the total requirements of $1.902 billion. On 14 June, the first meeting of the Iraq UNDAF Trust Fund Steering Committee, co-chaired by the Government of Iraq and the United Nations, was convened in Baghdad. The Steering Committee reviewed the available funds based on the balance returned in the course of closing the United Nations Development Group Iraq Trust Fund. The Iraq UNDAF Trust Fund, with 16 participating United Nations organizations, was established in January 2011 at the request of the Government of Iraq to facilitate and streamline the provision of donor resources towards UNDAF implementation. The Fund is expected to cover the complete UNDAF cycle for Iraq (January 2011-December 2014).

36. The Government of Iraq and the World Food Programme are in the final stages of negotiating an agreement to strengthen the public distribution system by procuring and delivering food for 7.5 million Iraqis, which represents nearly 25 per cent of the Iraqi population. The World Food Programme estimates that these efforts will cost close to $1.2 billion. This partnership will have two components: (a) the direct procurement and delivery of 1.5 million tons of commodities that make up the food basket, and (b) capacity-building training for the Ministry of Trade to improve processes that support the public distribution system, such as supply chain management and the procurement and delivery of food to vulnerable segments of the population.

37. UNAMI continues to seek ways to better support civil society through quick-impact projects. The Quick-Impact Projects Fund, managed and chaired by my Deputy Special Representative for Development and Humanitarian Support, has received over 100 project proposals from Iraqi civil society. The projects relate to the promotion of environmental awareness and water resource management planning, implementing community water and sanitation initiatives, and convening women and youth forums. Of the 40 possible projects to be funded, 5 projects have already been approved, with 25 more to be approved in the next month, leaving a balance of 10 projects to be identified.

38. The United Nations Integrated Task Force on Water Resource Management supported the University of Basra in organizing a national conference, held on 6 and 7 June 2011, focusing on governance and management of the marshlands. The conference brought together key national partners, including representatives of central and local governments, civil society, the private sector and the international community. In another initiative, in support of capacity-building, the task force organized a high-level training programme for government officials on transboundary water negotiations.

39. On 21 May, together with representatives from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), my Special Representative visited a settlement of internally displaced persons in the Al-Awasa area in Baghdad. The visit highlighted continuing efforts by UNHCR to ensure that all internally displaced persons are properly registered and have access to basic services. Related to this, during the visit of the Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), Joan Clos, to Iraq from 30 May to 1 June, high-level discussions were held on planning urban renewal, with a particular focus on ways to improve living conditions for internally displaced persons in urban areas.

40. On 21 and 22 April, flash floods occurred in Ninewa governorate, mostly affecting Sinjar District, where as many as 600 houses partially or totally collapsed. In Erbil, flooding affected nearly 1,000 families. Several organizations, including the United Nations Children's Fund, the International Organization for Migration, the International Rescue Committee and ICRC provided non-food items to the affected families.

E. Human rights activities

41. The reporting period witnessed a significant rise in assassinations of political leaders, government officials and security personnel. On 26 May, the Head of the Accountability and Justice Commission of Iraq (also known as the de-Baathification Commission), Ali al-Lami, was assassinated in eastern Baghdad. The Commission had previously issued decisions preventing a number of alleged former Baath party loyalists from taking part in the March 2010 elections and from holding public office. Assassination attempts were carried out against a Turkmen Member of Parliament from Kirkuk and the Governor of Ninewa on 12 and 30 May, respectively. On 12 May, a member of the Iraqiya bloc, Row'a al-Ogaidi, and her bodyguard were shot dead in Mosul by an unidentified armed group. On 1 June, the Deputy Human Rights Minister of Iraq, Abdul-Karim Abdullah, escaped an assassination attempt targeting his motorcade in Baghdad. On 20 May, two tribal leaders were shot dead in separate attacks in Mosul.

42. Honour crimes committed against women are a continuing source of concern. UNAMI recorded the deaths in suspicious circumstances of nine women between April and May in Kirkuk. Police informed UNAMI that three of the deaths were listed as suicides and four as murders carried out by unknown persons, while the causes of death of the other two women were unconfirmed but regarded as suspicious. UNAMI also continued to investigate a case from Mosul involving the honour killing of six women on 28 March.

43. There continue to be sporadic reports of children experiencing acts of indiscriminate violence and abductions. On 20 May, two children were killed when a bomb detonated in Mosul. On 2 April, in Kirkuk, criminal gangs abducted a 6-year-old girl who was later released after a ransom was paid. On 21 April, a 12-year-old boy was abducted in Kirkuk: his fate remains unknown.

44. During the reporting period, a number of public demonstrations were held, most of them peaceful. However, there were some isolated incidents of violence. On 10 June 2011, protestors who were demonstrating in Baghdad's Tahrir Square for government reforms were assaulted by unidentified armed men carrying sticks and clubs. Protestors were severely beaten and suffered broken bones and knife wounds. The protestors allege that the armed group acted with impunity despite the presence of Iraqi security forces. The protestors also claim that the Iraqi security forces attempted to control and suppress some of the demonstrations by restricting movements and arresting certain participants and organizers.

45. The situation in prisons and detention facilities remains of serious concern. UNAMI continued to receive reports of detainees facing abuse, ill-treatment and poor living conditions. According to official statistics from the four different government ministries responsible for detention centres, the number of detainees, security internees and sentenced prisoners increased from 28,956, at the end of

December 2009, to 35,653 (34,220 adults and 1,433 juveniles) by the end of December 2010. On 10 May, the Ministry of Human Rights confirmed the death as a result of torture of a detainee under police custody in Basra. On 12 May, the Governor of Ninewa announced the formation of a special commission to investigate cases of alleged violations of detainee rights.

46. UNAMI continued to provide technical support to the Committee of Experts that was endorsed on 16 June 2011 to select the 11 commissioners and 3 back-up members who will serve on the first Independent High Commission for Human Rights. The secretariat of the Commission has received a total of 3,085 applications. The Committee of Experts has agreed on selection criteria based on best practices from around the world that evaluate the individual skills and the collective needs of the Commission to meet its mandate as articulated by the Human Rights Commission law. UNAMI organized and facilitated a five-day workshop in Beirut from 1 to 6 July 2011 for the Committee of Experts to elaborate on these criteria and procedures for evaluation of the same.

47. From 5 to 7 June, UNAMI supported the Iraqi Ministry of Human Rights in organizing a national consultative conference on the Government's draft National Action Plan on Human Rights. The draft plan seeks to implement the 135 recommendations accepted by the Government of Iraq during the universal periodic review of Iraq in February 2010. The conference was held under the auspices of the Prime Minister and chaired by the Minister for Human Rights, Muhammad Shiya' Al-Sudani. The conference gathered a range of stakeholders, including representatives of the Government, the Council of Representatives, the judiciary, civil society and human rights experts.

48. From 29 May to 7 June 2011, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, Ivan Šimonović, visited Iraq and met with the Deputy Prime Minister, Rowsch Shaways, and representatives of the Ministries of Defence and Justice, as well as with journalists and civil society actors in Baghdad. In Erbil, he met with officials from the Kurdistan Regional Government, including the President, Prime Minister and Speaker of Parliament. The Assistant Secretary-General welcomed the Government's intention to develop a national action plan to implement the recommendations put forward by the United Nations. He called upon the Government of Iraq to ensure that civilians are protected from violence and to hold accountable any person or group suspected of perpetrating acts of violence. He also condemned the numerous cases of enforced disappearances, arbitrary detention and alleged torture that have been reported throughout Iraq.

49. UNAMI continues to monitor the humanitarian and human rights situation in Camp New Iraq, formerly known as Camp Ashraf, where some 3,400 members of the People's Mujahedeen Organization of Iran reside. On 7 and 8 April, Iraqi security forces entered the camp and assumed control over the northern side. Violence ensued and 34 residents of the camp died; more than 70 were wounded. On 9 April, the Government of Iraq reiterated its firm determination to close down the camp by the end of 2011. UNAMI and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights called for restraint and urged the Government of Iraq to refrain from the use of force contrary to international law. They also called for a thorough investigation into the incident which remains pending.

F. Security, operational and logistical issues

50. During the reporting period, the United Nations continued to operate in a challenging security environment. On 5 May, a car bomb targeted the Iraqi police headquarters in Hilla, killing 30 policemen. In another incident on 19 May, a complex attack on the Kirkuk Provincial Joint Coordination Centre left 20 people dead and 80 injured, including Iraqi police and civil defence members. This particular attack is believed to have been in response to the recent successful efforts by Iraqi security forces to locate weapons caches and key personnel wanted for terrorist attacks. In Baghdad on 22 May, at least 14 bombs killed 16 people, among them 9 civilians. Mass casualty attacks took place in Tikrit, Salahaddin governorate, on 3 and 6 June. On 3 June, a suicide-bomb attack inside a mosque during Friday prayers killed 17 people and wounded 60; later the same day, another suicide bomber detonated a vest inside the local hospital where victims of the mosque attack were receiving medical treatment, killing 6 people and wounding 16. On 6 June, another attack targeted the convoy of an Iraqi Army Brigade Commander which resulted in 13 people being killed, including the Commander. The Islamic State of Iraq claimed responsibility for the attack.

51. There have also been increased levels of indirect-fire attacks against the bases of the United States Forces in Iraq as well as against Baghdad International Airport and the International Zone in Baghdad. On 15 May, 11 rockets (107-mm) struck the International Zone, the highest recorded number in a single day in the past two years, followed by 4 additional rockets on 9 June. These incidents, together with ongoing bomb attacks by armed opposition groups, underline the continuing threat United Nations operations face in Iraq.

52. During the reporting period, UNAMI has been working on the transition of security support from the United States Forces to the Iraqi security forces. On 24 April, the Iraqi National Security Council requested that the Office of the High Commander of the Armed Forces, in coordination with the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior, support UNAMI protection requirements.

53. During the reporting period, UNAMI also took steps to put in place the necessary logistical arrangements to substitute the support of the United States Forces. UNAMI is also continuing preparations to ensure that it is able to sustain its presence in Kirkuk and Basra.

54. With support from the United Nations standing police capacity, a start-up team of four UNAMI police liaison personnel have been deployed to Baghdad, Erbil and Kirkuk to engage and coordinate UNAMI operations with the Ministry of the Interior and Iraqi police.

55. From 6 to 30 April 2011, a team from the Department of Field Support conducted a review of the UNAMI office in Kuwait, where some offices of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) are also housed. The purpose of the review was to determine where synergies and efficiencies could be achieved by merging certain work processes of UNAMI and UNAMA in Kuwait.

IV. Observations

56. Iraq continues to make progress in consolidating its young democracy, strengthening the rule of law, developing its institutions and addressing the economic and social challenges of the country. I once again wish to emphasize that these efforts would be considerably enhanced if all major political parties worked together in a spirit of national reconciliation, so that the legitimate aspirations of the Iraqi people for a better life could be addressed without delay.

57. The Iraq of today is very different from the Iraq of 2003. The Iraqi people can be proud of the progress that they have made over the past eight years. However, the country continues to face considerable political, security and developmental challenges that require the strong support of the United Nations and the international community. I am concerned that, in the light of the many pressing challenges in the region, the important basic needs of the Iraqi people may be forgotten, especially as the country's poverty index remains high, at 22.9 per cent. As we approach the renewal of the UNAMI mandate in the Security Council, I wish to assure the Government and people of Iraq of my strong personal commitment, and that of the United Nations, to sustain our long-standing support for the country.

58. Almost 7 months after the Council of Representatives approved the current Iraqi Government, and 16 months after the historic parliamentary elections of March 2010, there are still outstanding issues related to the Government formation process particularly appointments to key security posts. I call on the political leaders of Iraq to put aside their differences and move swiftly to agree on the way forward.

59. Echoing developments elsewhere in the region, there have been demonstrations in many parts of Iraq calling for better social services, job creation and an end to corruption. To this end, the United Nations country team will continue to progressively expand its presence in Iraq and to provide support through the priorities identified in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the National Development Plan 2010-2014.

60. Although the status of Kirkuk and other disputed internal territories remain divisive issues, I am encouraged by recent efforts by key Iraqi stakeholders to find common ground. Through the standing consultative mechanism under UNAMI auspices, political leaders, members of parliament and local representatives of Kirkuk have engaged in a dialogue on critical issues that will affect the future of Kirkuk and other disputed areas, including future security arrangements. I encourage the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government to continue to use this important forum to find mutually acceptable solutions that ultimately serve the interests of national reconciliation and long-term stability. The United Nations stands ready to assist in this process upon the request of the Government.

61. The future of Iraq will also depend on the strength of its institutions. In this respect, UNAMI will continue to provide capacity-building assistance to the Independent High Electoral Commission, a body that is central to the future of electoral processes and democratic development in Iraq. In order to ensure the independent and impartial role of the Commission in organizing upcoming election-related processes, it will be important for the Council of Representatives to provide maximum transparency in the selection of election Commissioners in preparation for the transition to the next Board in May 2012.

62. I firmly believe that, in today's interdependent world, regional cooperation is essential to the long-term stability and prosperity of Iraq. I understand that recent events in the region pose challenges to the further development of relations between Iraq and some of its neighbours. I therefore urge all countries in the region to increase their engagement with Iraq with a view to quickly resolving outstanding differences and identifying concrete areas of cooperation in the political, security and developmental fields that could be mutually beneficial for all concerned. UNAMI, with the support of the Security Council, is prepared to do all it can to support such efforts.

63. In particular, I commend the Governments of Iraq and Kuwait for the steps they have taken thus far towards normalizing their relations, and for their continued efforts to address outstanding bilateral issues. I wish to convey my sincere hope that there will be a follow-up to the first Joint Ministerial Committee meeting held in Kuwait in March and that both parties will remain committed to finding viable solutions. I am confident that an open and honest discussion will do much to build confidence between the two countries.

64. It is almost seven months now since the Security Council lifted a number of Chapter VII mandates on Iraq, a move unanimously hailed as a major step towards the normalization of its international status. I take this opportunity to reiterate my personal commitment to seeing Iraq achieve full normalization of its international status pursuant to Security Council resolution 1859 (2008). I therefore wish to remind the Government of Iraq of the importance of demonstrating to the Security Council tangible and expeditious progress on outstanding obligations pertaining to Kuwait, in particular missing Kuwaiti persons and property, including archives, and the Iraq-Kuwait boundary maintenance project. I would also like to remind the Iraqi authorities that the issue of compensation payments to Iraqi private citizens pursuant to resolution 899 (1994) is still pending. The Department of Political Affairs is awaiting a response to proposals it submitted to the Government of Iraq in this regard. I have consistently stated that progress on these fronts could create a positive momentum and enable the Security Council to take up my report pursuant to resolution 1859 (2008). In this context, both my Special Representative and High-level Coordinator remain committed to assisting Iraq and Kuwait in bringing closure to these long-standing Security Council mandates.

65. While the human rights situation in the country has improved, considerable challenges still need to be addressed in order to ensure that fundamental rights and freedoms are protected. In this context, I commend the ongoing preparations for establishing an Independent High Commission for Human Rights. I also welcome the consultative process put in place for the development of a national action plan on human rights, which, if implemented, would represent a milestone in strengthening human rights protection mechanisms in the country. As these mechanisms are being put in place, I urge the Government of Iraq to do its utmost to ensure that due process is upheld, and that further efforts are made to improve conditions in detention facilities in accordance with international conventions.

66. I am concerned by the loss of life at Camp New Iraq during the violent incident on 7 and 8 April. I urge the Iraqi authorities to refrain from the use of force, and to ensure adequate access for camp residents to goods and services. I also welcome the assurances by the Government of Iraq after the incident that it is committed to finding a peaceful solution which is acceptable to all. I therefore

encourage all stakeholders involved to increase their efforts to explore options and seek a consensual solution that ensures respect for Iraq's sovereignty while also being consistent with international human rights law and humanitarian principles. To this end, I call upon Member States to help to support and facilitate the implementation of any arrangement that is acceptable to the Government of Iraq and the camp residents.

67. While significant progress has been made to improve the security situation in Iraq, the recent spate of assassinations and bombings highlights the threat armed opposition groups still pose to the country's stability. I take this opportunity to reiterate the recent call by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights upon the Government of Iraq to ensure the protection of civilians from violence and hold accountable any person or group involved in the commission of acts of violence.

68. I take this opportunity to thank the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government for receiving the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs. It was an important opportunity to discuss the priorities of the new Government and ways that the United Nations could assist. I also express my sincere thanks to the Government of Iraq, and in particular, Prime Minister Al-Maliki, for agreeing to provide UNAMI with an extended compound in Baghdad.

69. The present report has highlighted developments in Iraq and the current activities of UNAMI pursuant to its broad mandate. At the request of and in consultation with the Government of Iraq, the United Nations will continue to facilitate political dialogue and national reconciliation, support electoral events, facilitate the coordination and delivery of development and humanitarian assistance, promote the protection of human rights and strengthen the rule of law in Iraq. Notwithstanding the challenging operating environment, UNAMI will continue to put in place the necessary arrangements to operate safely and effectively in Iraq.

70. In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation to my Special Representative for Iraq, Ad Melkert, all staff serving in UNAMI, both national and international, as well as the personnel of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, for their dedication and tireless efforts to support the people and Government of Iraq.